**National Policy for Senior Citizen**

719. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved an "Old Age Policy";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether 1999 has been declared as the year of the old; and

(d) the steps taken and being taken in pursuance of the said policy and the targets, if any, fixed for 1999, the year of the old?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) A National Policy for Older Persons has been announced which seeks to promote the well being of older persons by attending to their financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other developmental needs.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. The year 1999 has been declared as the International Year of Older Persons by the United Nations. While no targets have been fixed for 1999, under the National Policy the Government is committed to facilitate and coordinate efforts of Government departments, local bodies, NGOs, public spirited persons and others aimed at benefiting older persons. Under the Ministry's ongoing schemes, financial assistance is already being provided to voluntary organisations for construction and maintenance of Old Age Homes, Day Care Centres and Mobile Medicare Units for Older Persons.

**Evaluation of Existing Welfare Schemes for SCs/STs**

720. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to constitute a committee/ commission to evaluate the existing welfare measures and suggest new ones for the benefit of SCs and STs;

(b) whether a delegation has met the P.M. recently bringing to his notice certain problems concerning them; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) It has been decided to set up a 11 member Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribe Commission under Article 339(1) of the Constitution to examine the existing Tribal Sub Plan strategy and to suggest alternative arrangements if necessary.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected.

**Adoption of Destitute Children**

721. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:
SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of destitute children adopted in India since 1997;

(b) the reasons for low adoption; and

(c) Government's proposal for proper adoption laws?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) The Central Adoption Resource Agency,